

**ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION RULES GOVERNING
HOW TO MEET THE NEEDS OF CHILDREN WITH DYSLLEXIA**

August 2014

1.00 PURPOSE

- 1.01 These rules shall be known as the Arkansas Department of Education Rules Governing How to Meet the Needs of Children with Dyslexia.
- 1.02 The purpose of these rules is to establish guidelines for early screening, intervention and services to meet the educational needs of students with dyslexia.

2.00 AUTHORITY

- 2.01 These rules are enacted pursuant to the Arkansas State Board of Education's authority under Act 1294 of 2013 (codified at Ark. Code Ann. § 6-41-601 through § 6-41-610), Ark. Code Ann. §§ 6-11-105, and Ark. Code Ann. § 25-15-201 et seq.
- 2.02 NOTE: These rules set forth the procedures outlined in Act 1294 of 2013, codified at Ark. Code Ann. §§ 6-41-601 et seq. regarding screening, evaluation, and therapeutic services for students with dyslexia who may not otherwise qualify for special education services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), 20 U.S.C. §§1400 et seq. Students may display additional factors that complicate their dyslexia and may require more support than what may be provided for in these rules. At any time during the administration of the procedures set forth in these rules, students may be referred for evaluation for special education services in accordance with IDEA. While these rules may use similar terms as set forth in IDEA, no provision of these rules is intended to supplant, or in any way conflict with, IDEA. If a student with dyslexia is referred for special education services, public schools shall follow the requirements of IDEA.

3.00 DEFINITIONS

- 3.01 "Dyslexia" means a specific learning disability that is:
 - 3.01.1 Neurological in origin;
 - 3.01.2 Characterized by difficulties with accurate and fluent word recognition and poor spelling and decoding abilities that typically result from a deficit in the phonological component of language; and
 - 3.01.3 Often unexpected in relation to other cognitive abilities.

- 3.02 “Dyslexia therapist” means a professional who has completed training and obtained certification in dyslexia therapy from a dyslexia therapy training program approved by the Arkansas Department of Education.
- 3.03 The terms “dyslexia therapy” and “therapeutic services” mean an appropriate specialized dyslexia instructional program that is:
 - 3.03.1 Delivered by a dyslexia therapist;
 - 3.03.2 Explicit, direct instruction;
 - 3.03.3 Systematic, multi-sensory, and research based;
 - 3.03.4 Offered in a small group setting to teach students the components of reading instruction including without limitation:
 - 3.03.4.1 Phonemic awareness to enable a student to detect, segment, blend, and manipulate sounds in spoken language;
 - 3.03.4.2 Graphophonemic knowledge for teaching the letter-sound plan of English;
 - 3.03.4.3 The structure of the English language that includes morphology, semantics, syntax, and pragmatics;
 - 3.03.4.4 Linguistic instruction directed toward proficiency and fluency with the patterns of language so that words and sentences are carriers of meaning; and
 - 3.03.4.5 Strategies that students use for decoding, encoding, word recognition, fluency, and comprehension.
- 3.04 “Response to Intervention (RTI)” is the practice of:
 - 3.04.1 Screening all students to identify those needing extra support;
 - 3.04.2 Providing high-quality instruction and appropriate interventions matched to student needs;
 - 3.04.3 Closely monitoring progress to assess both the learning rate and the level of performance of individual students; and
 - 3.04.4 Basing instructional decisions about the intensity and duration of interventions on individual student response to intervention.

4.00 REQUIRED SCREENING

- 4.01 A school district shall screen:
 - 4.01.1 each student each year in kindergarten, grade one, and grade two (K-2);
 - 4.01.2 a student in kindergarten, grade one, or grade two (K-2) who transfers to a new school and has not been screened during the same school year;
 - 4.01.3 a student in grade three (3) or higher who has difficulty, as noted by a classroom teacher, in any skills listed in 4.02 of these rules;
 - 4.01.4 a student from another state who enrolls for the first time in Arkansas in kindergarten through grade two (K-2) unless the student presents documentation that the student:
 - 4.01.4.1 had the screening or a similar screening in the current school year; or
 - 4.01.4.2 is exempt from screening as set forth in Section 4.04 of these Rules.
- 4.02 The screening of students shall be performed with fidelity and include without limitation:
 - 4.02.1 Phonological and phonemic awareness;
 - 4.02.2 Sound symbol recognition;
 - 4.02.3 Alphabet knowledge;
 - 4.02.4 Decoding skills;
 - 4.02.5 Rapid naming skills; and
 - 4.02.6 Encoding skills
- 4.03 Every school district shall ensure that students are screened using the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) for phonological and phonemic awareness, sound symbol recognition, alphabet knowledge, and decoding skills and by using an appropriate screener for rapid naming skills and encoding skills.

4.04 The following students shall be exempt from dyslexia screening:

4.04.1 Students with an existing diagnosis of dyslexia;

4.04.2 Students with a sensory impairment that prevents screening for dyslexia.

5.00 INTERVENTION AND SERVICES

5.01 If the DIBELS screening, or the screening for rapid naming and encoding skills, indicates that a student has markers for dyslexia and needs intervention, Response to Intervention (RTI) shall be used to address the needs of the student.

NOTE: DIBELS may indicate markers for a reading deficiency, which may include markers for dyslexia. DIBELS alone may be insufficient to determine the existence of dyslexia. Refer to the Arkansas Dyslexia Resource Guide for a list of screening instruments.

5.02 If RTI indicates the possibility of dyslexia, the student shall be evaluated for dyslexia upon the notification and consent of the parents or legal guardians of the student.

5.03 If the dyslexia evaluation indicates a student is dyslexic, the student shall be provided therapeutic services upon the notification and consent of the parents or legal guardians of the student.

NOTE: Refer to the Arkansas Dyslexia Resource Guide for a description of therapeutic services.

5.04 If it is determined the student has functional difficulties in the academic environment due to dyslexia, the necessary accommodations or equipment for the student shall be provided under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. § 794 and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, 42 U.S.C. §§ 12131-12165, as they existed on February 1, 2013.

5.05 Therapeutic services may be provided by a tutor who is highly qualified and trained, as determined by the ADE and outlined in the Arkansas Dyslexia Resource Guide.

5.06 If a student's performance on the DIBELS screening, and the appropriate screening for rapid naming skills and encoding skills under Section 4.00, indicates a need for additional screening the student may receive additional testing by a trained professional using a norm-referenced test.

6.00 INDEPENDENT EVALUATION

- 6.01 If a student's performance on a dyslexia evaluation under Section 5.02 of these rules indicates a need for dyslexia therapy services, the student's parent or legal guardian shall be:
 - 6.01.1 Notified of the results of the dyslexia evaluation;
 - 6.01.2 Provided with information and resource material including without limitation:
 - 6.01.2.1 the common indicators of dyslexia;
 - 6.01.2.2 appropriate classroom interventions and accommodations for students with dyslexia; and
 - 6.01.2.3 the right of the parent or legal guardian to have the student receive an independent evaluation by a:
 - 6.01.2.3.1 Licensed psychological examiner;
 - 6.01.2.3.2 School psychology specialist;
 - 6.01.2.3.3 Licensed speech-language pathologist; or
 - 6.01.2.3.4 Certified dyslexia training specialist.
- 6.02 If a student's performance on a dyslexia evaluation under Section 5.02 of these rules indicates the need for dyslexia therapy services, the school district may perform a comprehensive dyslexia evaluation in addition to the required RTI under 5.02 of this Rule.
- 6.03 If a parent or legal guardian chooses to have an independent evaluation for the student, the school district shall consider the diagnosis from the independent evaluation and allow the student to receive direct intervention from a dyslexia therapist.

7.00 INSTRUCTIONAL APPROACHES

- 7.01 Dyslexia therapy for a student whose dyslexia evaluation under Section 5.02 of these rules indicates the need for dyslexia therapy services shall be provided with fidelity and include the following instructional approaches:
 - 7.01.1 Explicit, direct instruction that is systematic, sequential, and cumulative and follows a logical plan of presenting the

alphabetic principle that targets the specific needs of the student without presuming prior skills or knowledge of the student;

7.01.2 Individualized instruction to meet the specific needs of the student in a small group setting that uses intensive, highly concentrated instruction methods and materials that maximize student engagement;

7.01.3 Meaning-based instruction directed at purposeful reading and writing, with an emphasis on comprehension and composition; and

7.01.4 Multisensory instruction that incorporates the simultaneous use of two (2) or more sensory pathways during teacher presentations and student practice.

7.02 Until there are a sufficient number of graduates from a dyslexia therapy program established at the university level in Arkansas or from a dyslexia therapy program established at the university level in another state that is approved by the Arkansas Department of Education, the department shall allow dyslexia therapy to be provided by individuals who have received training and certification from a program approved by the department.

8.00 REPORTING BY SCHOOL DISTRICTS

8.01 The superintendent of a school district shall annually report the results of the school district screening required under Section 4.00 of these rules. Additional information concerning the manner of submission of the report may be found in the Arkansas Dyslexia Resource Guide.

9.00 DYSLEXIA SPECIALIST

9.01 No later than the 2015 fiscal year, the Department of Education shall employ at least one (1) dyslexia specialist who is a dyslexia therapist, licensed psychologist, licensed psychometrist, licensed speech-language pathologist, or certified dyslexia training specialist with a minimum of three (3) years of field experience in screening, identifying, and treating dyslexia and related disorders to provide technical assistance for dyslexia and related disorders to school districts across the state.

9.01.1 The dyslexia specialist shall:

9.01.1.1 Be highly trained in dyslexia and related disorders, including best-practice interventions and treatment models;

9.01.1.2 Be responsible for the accountability of screening results and the implementation of professional awareness required Section 11.00 of these rules and

9.01.1.3 Serve as the primary source of information and support for school districts addressing the needs of students with dyslexia and related disorders.

9.02 The Department of Education shall ensure at least one (1) staff member at each education service cooperative is trained as a dyslexia specialist to provide necessary information and support to school districts.

9.02.1 A dyslexia specialist shall have completed training and received certification from a program approved by the department. Additional information pertaining to training, certification and program approval may be found in the Arkansas Dyslexia Resource Guide.

10.0 DYSLEXIA INTERVENTIONISTS

10.01 No later than the 2015-2016 academic year, a school district shall have at least one individual to serve as a dyslexia interventionist as defined in the Arkansas Dyslexia Resource Guide who are trained as dyslexia interventionists:

10.01.1 By the Department of Education; or

10.01.2 Using other dyslexia training programs approved by the department.

11.00 PROFESSIONAL AWARENESS

11.01 No later than the 2014-2015 school year, the Department of Education shall ensure that each teacher receives professional awareness on the following:

11.01.1 The indicators of dyslexia; and

11.01.2 The science behind teaching a student who is dyslexic.

11.02 Professional awareness may be provided:

11.02.1 Online through Arkansas IDEAS;

11.02.2 At an education service cooperative; or

- 11.02.3 At another venue approved by the Department of Education.

12.00 EDUCATION IN TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAMS

The Department of Education shall collaborate with the Department of Higher Education to ensure that all teacher education programs offered at state-supported institutions of higher education include information on the identification of students at risk for dyslexia and related disorders.

13.00 DYSLEXIA RESOURCE GUIDE

The Department of Education shall maintain and update the Dyslexia Resource Guide that is used as a guide for school districts, public schools, and teachers.